

## **NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the NORTH DEVON CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE held at the Crematorium, Barnstaple on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 2.30 p.m.

Present: Representing North Devon District Council

Councillors Jones, Lane, and Moores

Representing Torridge District Council

Councillors A.Inch, S.Inch and Langmead (In the Chair)

Officers

Treasurer, Secretary and Accountant.

### **(a) APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Dezart, Edgell and Yabsley and Head of Operational Services and Crematorium Manager.

### **(b) MINUTES**

(i) RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2018 (previously circulated) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(ii) Matters Arising – There were no matters arising

### **(c) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **(d) CREMATORIUM MATTERS**

The Joint Committee considered a report by the Crematorium Manager (previously circulated).

#### i) Achievements

It was noted:

A) That cloth seat bases and backs had been ordered for the Aspen Chapel to replace the dated vinyl chair bases.

B) That two locally made full size metal soldier figures had been installed in the area opposite the reception. This it was hoped would promote Remembrance Day wreaths to be left as they are at Christmas. If the figures are well received a variation of them may be used to highlight the gardens, possibly using 'characters' of local relevance.

ii) Staffing

It was noted:

- A) That the organist contract had been re-tendered on a 5-year contract. One of the existing deputies was successful and continuity of service had been maintained. A saving of approximately 15% was anticipated as the fee remained the same and had not been enhanced for longer or over-running services.
- B) That the agreed part-time administrator post would be filled by an existing full-time officer on 1<sup>st</sup> April and the recruitment process for the full-time post was underway with interviews on 8<sup>th</sup> March.
- C) That the recruitment process for the part-time gardener was under way with interviews on 11<sup>th</sup> March.

iii) Metals Recycling Charity Award

It was noted that North Devon Hospice had been awarded a £7,000 donation and that CRUSE had been nominated for the next award in the normal order of nominations.

Concern was expressed that some charities received more than others depending on the award each time and asked that the Crematorium Manager e mail Councillors explaining the new level of award and a list of awards over the past 3 years.

iv) Ground Improvements Update

It was noted that the path between Authors & Royals had been ordered and it was hoped that works would be completed during February/March.

The following costings for the proposed schedule of works in order of priority were agreed subject to approval of the budget (see minute (f) below):

Section	Element	Works	Priority	Cost (plus 15% prelim/contingency)	Cumulative Costs
Aspen Flower Pavilion	Shelter	Replace unsafe/ leaking structure	1	£22,700	£22,700
Rowan Exit Area	Shelter	Install Sail Shelter	2	£10,000	£32,700
Painters	Drainage	Install land drain	3	£4,570	£37,270
Painters	Footpaths	Upgrade surface, widen & replace hedge	4	£7,176	£44,446
Painters	Footpaths	Upgrade surface (resin)	5	£22,700	£67,146

v) Larkbear

It was noted that planning consent had been granted for the Larkbear development. The developer (Persimmon Homes) were now required to seek a traffic order which would be the subject of advertisement and consultation with interested parties (this Committee) to provide comments to Devon County Council about the impact of the order.

The Crematorium Manager was requested to contact NDC Planners to confirm that the planning consent was subject to a s 106 agreement and e mail confirmation to Councillors.

vi) Crematorium Figures

The Cremation figures were noted.

vii) Refurbishment of Aspen Chapel

It was noted that contract had been awarded to Westcountry Maintenance from Bideford and that works had commenced on 3<sup>rd</sup> January with an anticipated completion date of 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019

It was considered that the roof at the rear of the Chapel should be extended to cover the uncovered area and that the Crematorium Manager obtain the additional cost and whether there are any planning requirements.

viii) Cameo

It was noted that the application for the 2018 round of CAMEO (mercury abatement scheme) had been submitted on the basis of 1616 abated cremations. There were 1591 abated cremations in 2017.

The Crematorium Manager was requested to e mail Councillors with an explanation of abated cremations and the figures.

ix) No Service Cremation Service Option (Direct Cremation)

The Committee was reminded that the option of a direct cremation service (no mourners present and no service or music) had been agreed in principle at the last meeting with any consequent pricing to be considered at this meeting.

It was reported that the current early morning short service option costs of £560 and had been taken up as an option 102 times in 2018. It was estimated that 60% actually had no mourners and would therefore have possibly been booked as a direct cremation had that option been available.

Surrounding Crematoria's fees varied with two offering the direct cremation service at £499. At this fee level it would require approximately an additional 12 - 15 services (depending on next year's fees) to offset the income differential.

RESOLVED, that the service be offered at a charge of £499.

x) Medical Examiner Post

It was noted that significant changes to Government policy had resulted in this post now being a NHS provided/funded role. It was expected that initially only hospital deaths would use the new process, starting some time during the next financial year with all deaths using the system about 12 months later. When the system was fully operational the existing medical referee service funded by the crematorium would cease.

xi) Phase B (Garage Store/Memorial Rooms

It was noted that in a previous meeting (August 2016) Phase B had been estimated at a cost of £186,000. However this sum had not allowed for VAT and the contingency guidelines had increased by 5%, bringing the cost closer to £234,000. There had also been inflationary increases in the last 2.5 years.

The original intention was to:

- demolish the existing buildings
- build storage in the bungalow garden
- build new memorial hall on existing building site

The failing state of the building had forced the temporary move of the memorial rooms to the existing flower room, a move that had proven (and had remained) very popular and had raised the possibility of not building a new memorial hall build and re-directing the funds to other projects and/or making a saving.

The new storage building identified the possibility of creating a hearse pull-in (the store's driveway') and also to create a bulk material store area adjacent, releasing the current area for car-park use when funds allowed for approx. 30 additional car-spaces.

The existing flower room, if it was to become a permanent location for the book of remembrance etc. would need some enhancements in terms of new roof, lighting and internal/external decorations.

The existing building site would need to be landscaped post-demolition as it was at the entrance and seen by all visitors. It was intended that a memorial garden be created the design of which preserved the ability to build in the future should expansion be necessary.

Item	Cost (inc. fees and VAT)	Cumulative Costs	Residual from £234,000
Demolish existing garage	£32,000	£32,000	£202,000
Build new store & bulk material area/hearse pull-in	£128,000	£160,000	£74,000
Flower Room Refurb/New Roof/Redecoration	£38,000	£198,000	£36,000
Create Memorial Garden on old garage site	£20,000	£218,000	£16,000

RESOLVED:

- i) That Phase B be approved on the basis of the costings as outlined above.
- ii) That any residual funds remaining be used to fund the additional expenditure for the extension of the roof at the rear of the Aspen Chapel.

**(e) PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 3 2018/19**

The Joint Committee considered and noted a report by the Treasurer (previously circulated) regarding the performance for April to December 2018/19.

**(f) 2019/20 BUDGET, FEES AND CHARGES**

RESOLVED on consideration of a report by the Treasurer (previously circulated) regarding the budget and charges 2019/20.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the basic Cremation charge for 2019/20 be increased by 3% to £680 and the surplus distribution in 2019/20 to the constituent authorities be reduced accordingly.
- (ii) That the 2019/20 Budget as set out in paragraph 3 of the report be approved subject to being amended in accordance with minute (i) above.(Amended copy attached)
- (iii) That the fees and charges for 2019/20 as detailed in paragraph 6.3 of the report and appendix 2 be approved subject to being amended in accordance with minute (i) above. (Amended copy attached)
- (iv) That the distribution of surpluses for 2018/19 of £367,680 to the constituent authorities: £220,608 to North Devon Council and £147,072 to Torridge District Council be approved.
- (v) That the transfer of £100,000 to the equipment replacement reserve be approved.

**(g) DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The following dates for future meetings were agreed:

Friday 21 June 2019 @ 2.30 p.m.  
 Friday 9 August 2019 @ 2.30 p.m.  
 Friday 8 November 2019 @ 2.30 p.m.  
 Friday 7 February 2020 @ 2.30 p.m.

Members expressed their thanks to Officers for their support over the past 4 years and to each other in working together to the benefit of both authorities.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 4.00 p.m.